

TODAY is the day on which the Nation's Capital shows exactly where it stands in the matter of national preparedness.

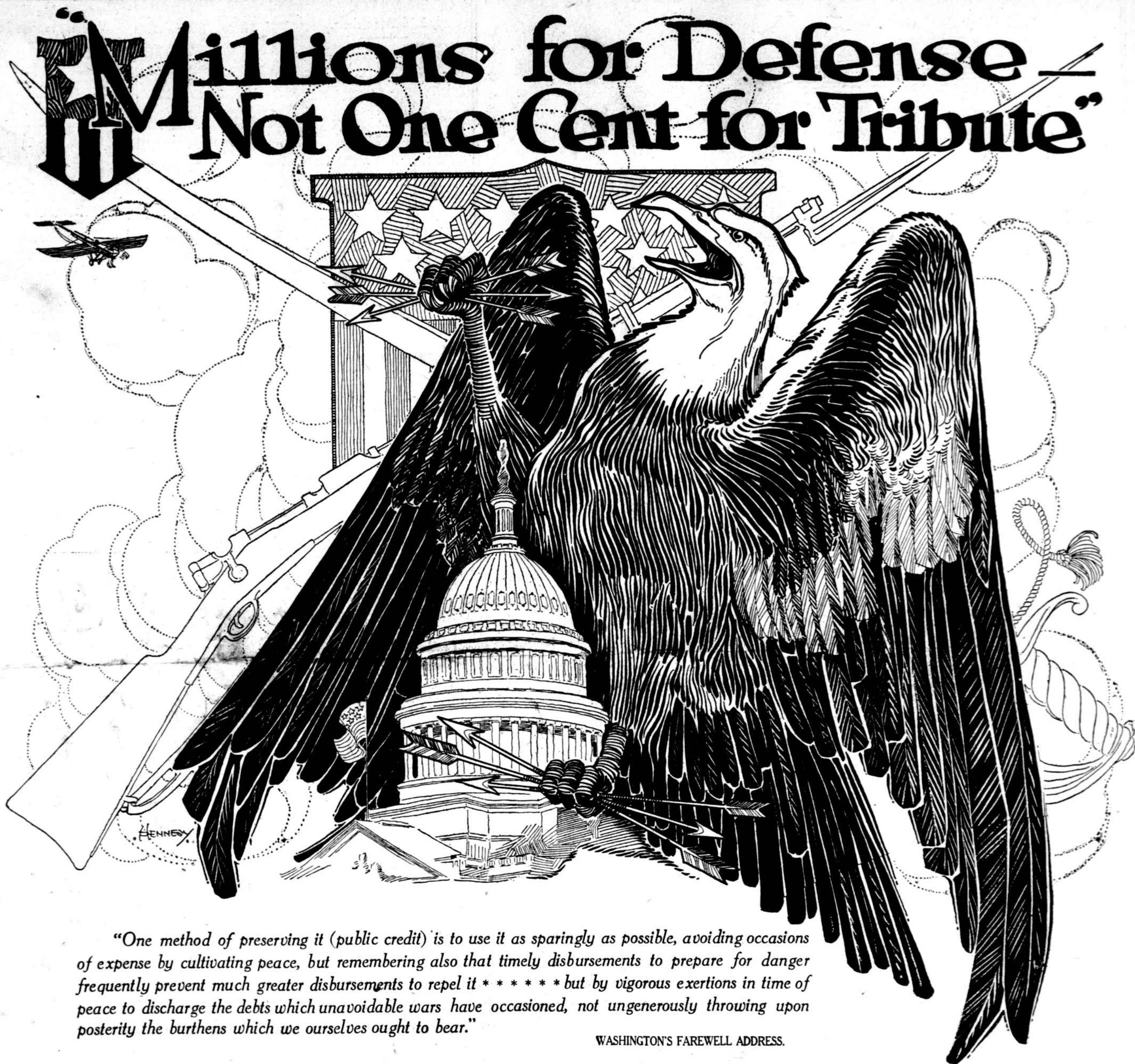
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*"One method of preserving it (public credit) is to use it as sparingly as possible, avoiding occasions of expense by cultivating peace, but remembering also that timely disbursements to prepare for danger frequently prevent much greater disbursements to repel it * * * * * but by vigorous exertions in time of peace to discharge the debts which unavoidable wars have occasioned, not ungenerously throwing upon posterity the burthens which we ourselves ought to bear."*

WASHINGTON'S FAREWELL ADDRESS.

GEORGE WASHINGTON, in his farewell address announcing to the country his determination not to be a candidate for a third term as first President of the United States, uttered an earnest warning against entangling European alliances. He pointed out earnestly that military weakness of this country, not only might easily result in aggressions directed at us by stronger nations, but might force us into the entangling alliances he warned against in order to secure from a stronger nation, at the price of much national self-respect, that defensive power necessary to the maintenance of even a semblance of independence.

To be prepared for war as one of the surest ways of preserving peace, epitomizes the advice which the Father of His Country, its foremost warrior, statesman and leader in the arts of peace, offered in retiring from public life.

That is what "preparedness" means for us—preparation in time of peace to an extent that would discourage any possible aggressor from inviting war. Or, in the failure to discourage such aggression by peaceful means, to make the cost as light as possible for ourselves and our posterity, and as heavy as possible for our enemy.

The chance of war and its cost decrease in exact proportion as the preparation for war increases.

It is quite too obvious for discussion, that unarmed or hastily armed merchant ships are no match for heavily armed and armored ships of war. And it is quite as obvious that a safe measure of preparedness on sea is equivalent to the naval strength of the strongest combination of enemy-ships that might reasonably be expected to align against us.

The same rule is applicable to the question of land preparation, both as to size, training and equipment of military units.

Gen. "Light Horse" Harry Lee, the famous Revolutionary leader, had this to say of the cost of unpreparedness in human lives:

"A government is the murderer of its citizens which sends them into the field uninformed and untaught, where they are to meet men of the same age and strength, mechanized by education and discipline for battle."

And Gen. Washington said:

"Regular troops alone are equal to the exigencies of modern war, as well for defense as offense, and when a substitute is attempted it must prove illusory and ruinous."

"Preparedness" is not for war, but against it. It does not invite war, it forbids it.

Like organized fire insurance, with the requirements of precautionary measures, "preparedness" seeks to avoid conflagration, and, if unhappily failing in this, to shift as much as possible of the burden of cost from the victim.